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**CRITICAL COMBAT PERFORMANCES,
KNOWLEDGES, AND SKILLS REQUIRED OF THE
INFANTRY RIFLE SQUAD LEADER**

Mounted and Dismounted Platoon Combat Formations

by

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**The George Washington University
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FOREWORD

In response to a request from the United States Army Infantry School (USAIS), HumRRO Division No. 4 (Infantry) initiated a Technical Advisory Service research project to identify and record the critical combat performances, knowledges, and skills required of the Infantry Rifle Squad Leader (IRSL) and the Infantry Fire Team Leader (IFTL).

The requirements imposed upon the IRSL and IFTL are essentially the same, except that the former is responsible for the control of the men and fires of both fire teams in a rifle squad, rather than only one. The senior IFTL within each squad must be prepared to assume effective leadership of the squad immediately if the IRSL becomes a casualty, completes a prescribed combat tour, or is absent for any reason. Since it is common practice to provide the same training for candidates for both positions of leadership and to employ the outstanding candidates in the higher position, each paper in this series will set forth the critical requirements imposed upon the IRSL and, therein, those imposed upon the IFTL as well.

Under Work Unit LEAD, Work Sub-Unit I, the critical combat performances, knowledges, and skills of the Infantry Rifle Platoon Leader were published in a series of 41 papers covering a like number of subject areas. Each paper was published with prior review and concurrence by the USAIS Instructional Departments concerned. These papers are being used as the primary source of data in completing a parallel series of papers for the Infantry Rifle Squad Leader and the Infantry Fire Team Leader. This document details the requirements in the area of mounted and dismounted platoon combat formations.

This Technical Advisory Service research is being performed at HumRRO Division No. 4 (Infantry), Fort Benning, Georgia. The present Director of Research is Dr. T. O. Jacobs.

Military support for the study is being provided by the U.S. Army Infantry Human Research Unit, Fort Benning, Georgia. LTC Chester I. Christie, Jr. is the present Unit Chief.

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MOUNTED AND DISMOUNTED PLATOON COMBAT FORMATIONS

General Considerations

Introduction

In aircraft, naval vessels, and armored vehicles, the leaders and the individuals who function as a team to control movement and deliver fire upon the enemy are literally bound together by their craft or vehicle. The Infantry Rifle Platoon Leader (IRPL), his IRSL's, IFTL's, and other team members enjoy no such advantage during dismounted combat. Dense vegetation, darkness, dust, smoke, precipitation, limitations to movement imposed by enemy fire, and the use of cover, concealment, and camouflage by their men frequently will prohibit Infantry leaders from maintaining visual contact with the fighters comprising their small units. These same conditions, singly or in combination, will as often prevent the IRPL, the IRSL, the IFTL, and their men from determining the exact locations of the enemy. Thus there is a demand for movement or maneuver to permit platoon members to locate and close with the enemy. Simultaneously, there is a demand for the controlled delivery of fire, because effective fire is the decisive element in combat at small-unit level.

The degree to which the weapons system represented by the Infantry Rifle Platoon can function effectively stems in large part from the ability of the leaders to select and supervise the use of effective combat formations in controlling movement or maneuver and the delivery of fire. Leader knowledge and skill alone will not suffice. Each platoon member must know his own position and task in relation to other members in any formation likely to be employed in combat. Whether platoon members can be seen or not, their approximate positions must be known to leaders and to each other on the basis of intensive practice and well-established SOP. To bring the platoon to this level of training for mounted and dismounted operations, including the control of integrated infantry-tank formations, is the responsibility of the IRPL and his IRSL's and IFTL's. Under the guidance of the IRPL, the IRSL's and their squad members must develop and maintain a level of proficiency that will ensure success in combat under the most adverse conditions of weather, terrain, visibility, and enemy activity.

The control of men and fires within the rifle squads and fire teams that comprise the platoon combat formations is the responsibility of the IRSL's and the IFTL's. To maintain flexibility and to ensure an equitable distribution of hazardous duty (e.g., point squad), each of the three rifle squads must function equally well in any position within any platoon combat formation and the fire teams must also be capable of rotation within their respective squads for the same reasons. The senior IFTL in each squad must be capable of assuming the leadership and control of his squad in any platoon combat formation in the event the IRSL becomes an ineffective casualty. Practice of platoon combat drill must occur continually when time permits between combat operations and particular emphasis must be placed upon the integration and training of replacements by the IRSL and the IFTL's in each squad.

Scope

This paper covers the standard mounted and dismounted platoon combat formations, including integrated infantry-tank formations, that must be employed to control the platoon's men and fires in combat. The material contained in this paper is directly related to the material covered in the papers on Tactical Movement; Offensive Operations; Retrograde Operations; Patrolling; Squad Formations, Battle Drills, and Elementary Fire and Maneuver; Land Navigation; Cover, Concealment, and Camouflage; Armored Personnel Carrier; and Use of Indirect Supporting Fires.

Materiel

All TOE and special equipment comprising the combat load for the Infantry Rifle Platoon in mounted (APC or MICV) or dismounted roles.

Tanks during combined arms operations.

Battlefield Cues

Orders and instructions from the IRPL or higher authority, including information and signals relayed through other leaders and platoon members.

Delivery of fire or report of information by point, flank, or rear security elements indicating contact or probable contact with the enemy.

Receipt of enemy fire, including small arms fire, indirect fire, fire from enemy aircraft, and encounters with enemy mines and boobytraps.

Enemy targets or the indications (sights, sounds, odors) of existence of enemy targets, including suspected enemy positions, possible ambush sites, tracks, trail signs, etc.

Fields of fire and observation, concealment and cover, obstacles, key terrain, and avenues of approach likely to affect the mission of the platoon or any subordinate element during movement or maneuver.

Discovery of significant differences in observed terrain as compared to impressions gained from map study during planning.

Receipt of pertinent weather forecasts, light data, tide tables, etc., or observed changes in weather and visibility that affect control, e.g., falling darkness may force use of reduced distances and intervals between men.

Stragglers or dispersion threatening loss of control.

"Bunching up" that increases vulnerability to enemy fire.

"Parade ground formations" that increase vulnerability to enemy fire as opposed to deliberately irregular spacing and maximum use of cover and concealment by small-unit members.

Loss of essential contact between individuals or elements within the platoon or between the parent platoon and another element of a company formation.

Appearance of enemy targets between friendly elements of a dismounted platoon combat formation, e.g., enemy snipers in camouflaged spider holes. (Such an occurrence demands controlled, carefully aimed fire to prevent causing friendly casualties beyond the enemy targets.)

Friendly tanks halted by mines or enemy antitank fire during combined arms operations.

Antitank weapons or similar targets suitable for engagement with tank main guns, tank machineguns, or the heavy machinegun mounted on the APC.

Gullies, marshy ground, or other natural or man-made obstacles to movement in tracked vehicles.

An exposed and vulnerable platoon flank when the IRSL is leading a flank squad responsible for security of the platoon's or larger unit's flank.

Mistakenly delivered fire from friendly sources that threatens friendly troops.

Colored smoke or panels marking the location of friendly troops.

Performances, Knowledges, and Skills

1. ON ORDER, THE IRSL WILL SPECIFY AND SUPERVISE THE INITIAL FORMATION OF HIS SQUAD AS AN INTEGRAL ELEMENT OF HIS PARENT PLATOON'S DISMOUNTED COMBAT FORMATION AND REQUIRE AND SUPERVISE SUBSEQUENT CHANGES IN HIS SQUAD'S FORMATION IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE ORDERS OF THE PLATOON LEADER, THE DEMANDS OF HIS SQUAD MISSION AS RELATED TO THE PLATOON MISSION, AND THE GOVERNING SITUATION UNDER ALL CONDITIONS OF TERRAIN, WEATHER, VISIBILITY, AND ENEMY PROXIMITY AND ACTIVITY.

He will : know that the use of standard, flexible dismounted platoon combat formations is vital to the effective control of the platoon's men and fires during movement to successive positions to permit closing with and defeating the enemy. 1

: know that mastery of the critical knowledges and skills pertinent to effective participation in dismounted platoon combat formations will transfer to his participation in mounted formations; recognize and apply common relationships; and point them out to his IFTL's and potential leaders. 2

: know that the platoon leader will specify and supervise timely use of the platoon column, wedge, vee, echelon (right or left), or line formation, as applicable, to best satisfy the requirements for immediately available fire, control, security, flexibility, and speed of movement after due consideration of the platoon mission, the terrain, weather, visibility, and enemy proximity and activity. 3

: recognize that his rifle squad may be required to function in any one of the three designated positions for rifle squads within the five standard dismounted platoon combat formations or variations of these formations and that the order of march for the platoon will fix the initial position of his squad within the platoon formation in relation to the other two rifle squads and the weapons squad. 4

He must : know that the platoon leader will, to form the platoon for tactical movement, specify the appropriate platoon combat formation, the order of march, the direction of movement, the initial squad formation within the platoon formation, the base squad, intervals/distances between squads and individuals, special security measures, and any special instructions to the base squad leader or to attached individuals or elements. 5

- : when visibility and control will permit, maintain a minimum of 5 to 10 meters between men (except weapons crew members functioning as a team) and increase intervals/distances to 10 to 15 meters between men by passing the word in areas where the threat exists of mines and boobytraps, observed indirect fires, or automatic weapons fire. 6
- : anticipate that the platoon leader will specify SOP distances/intervals between squads and between men and announce variations in SOP with due consideration to control and to vulnerability to enemy fire with full recognition that the reduction of distances and intervals to increase control also increases vulnerability to enemy fire. 7
- : particularly when operating against guerrillas, recognize that use of the squad file within any deep platoon formation will reduce vulnerability to enemy mines and boobytraps, including Claymores, as compared to the squad column or the modified squad column. 8
- He will : anticipate the possible loss of individuals and elements from platoon combat formations, particularly when moving in darkness, dense vegetation, inclement weather, or when detouring or traversing obstacles or areas under enemy artillery and mortar fire, and use the following precautions as appropriate: 9
- a. Make and require his IFTL's and selected squad members to make visual checks from front to rear at frequent intervals to ensure against straggling within the squad and to maintain contact between squads.
 - b. Use luminous tape on the back of turned-up collars during darkness to aid visual contact.
 - c. Make squad head counts or participate in platoon head counts after halts and after crossing obstacles, i.e., ensure that his men know how to respond to an order to "Send up the count."
 - d. Where visibility limitations and frequent changes in direction demand, require maintenance of physical contact with a hand-held line or by having each man lightly grasp the pack of the man ahead.
 - e. Supervise and require supervision of stragglers by IFTL's.

- f. When the situation will permit, personally check his squad by movement along its full span to ensure against loss of individuals as stragglers, to check on and temporarily relieve heavily loaded men (share their loads for short distances), and to ensure the maintenance of contact with leading, trailing, or adjacent (as applicable) squads.
- g. Push out or drop back selected men as "file closers" to maintain contact between squads for short periods while his or another squad adjusts to the speed of movement of the platoon formation.
- h. Require an immediate SOP report from any squad member who notes the unexplained absence of any other squad member or the loss of essential contact between squads or fire teams.

He must : recognize that the use of tight, geometric platoon combat formations will aid enemy target detection and invite lethal fire; habitually avoid "parade ground formations" in controlling his squad. 10

: continually stress the use of dispersion, cover, concealment, and camouflage, and the maintenance of light and noise discipline to maintain secrecy of movement and to limit enemy use of aimed direct fire and observed indirect fire. 11

: know and require that each IFTL and potential leader know each standard rifle platoon combat formation and the routes followed by each element to change from any standard formation to any other including: 12

- a. The locations, armament, and sectors of responsibility of individuals according to assignment within fire teams.
- b. The locations of fire teams within rifle squads.
- c. The locations of the rifle squads and the usual location of the weapons squad within the platoon formations.
- d. The SOP base squad for any standard platoon formation.
- e. The SOP intervals and distances usually governing the separation of individuals and elements within any standard platoon combat formation.

- : diagram, without references or notes, the critical information for use as a training aid during instruction to depict any standard platoon combat formation and show typical distances and intervals in quantitative terms. 13
- : demonstrate the required action on the ground by placing and directing the movement of individuals and elements during rehearsals, and supervise movement and maintenance of locations, intervals, and distances during combat usage. 14
- He will : anticipate that the platoon leader will establish SOP to: 15
- a. Make the leading squad the base squad when moving in column, wedge, or echelon formation.
 - b. Make the right leading squad the base squad in the vee formation.
 - c. Use the center squad as the base squad in the line formation.
- : anticipate that the platoon leader will announce necessary exceptions to the above SOP, e.g., if the adjacent platoon on the right is the base platoon in a coordinated company line formation, designate the right squad in the platoon line formation to serve as the base squad until another formation change indicates reversion to the SOP base squad designation. 16
- : know and ensure that his men know that the SOP base squad automatically becomes the base squad when a formation change is ordered while another squad is temporarily acting as designated base squad, serves as base squad during changes in formation, and continues to act as base squad after the formation changes unless another squad is designated to act temporarily as base squad. 17
- : habitually designate a base fire team within his squad to aid his squad to regulate speed of movement and to maintain direction of movement and essential contact within the platoon formation. 18
- : know that the platoon leader will control the speed and direction of movement of the base squad and require the other squads to maintain appropriate distances/intervals and thus control the speed and direction of movement of the platoon. 19

- : when his squad serves as base squad for the platoon, aid the IFTL of the base fire team to regulate speed of movement and to maintain the required direction of movement, e.g., refer to the compass as necessary, particularly during darkness; use steering marks; and interpret and pass on instructions received from the platoon leader. 20
- He must : know the advantages and disadvantages of the means of communication available (to include radio, verbal orders, arm and hand signals, touch signals, observation of base element, passing the word from man to man) and use the most effective means available to control speed and direction of movement or to order formation changes for his squad and to relay orders from the platoon leader pertinent to the platoon formation. 21
- He will : know that the need to change a platoon combat formation may stem from: 22
- a. Proximity to known or suspected enemy locations, e.g., as indicated by the receipt of enemy fire.
 - b. Evaluation of cover and concealment afforded by the terrain, with due consideration to obstacles to movement.
 - c. Information of the enemy and terrain provided by preceding friendly elements or by the platoon's own security elements, e.g., the IRSL's squad members when responsible for point security.
 - d. Enemy capabilities to use mines, boobytraps, indirect fire, flat trajectory fire, and air attack.
 - e. Orders and instructions from the company commander, e.g., orders to assault as quickly as possible.
 - f. Current demands of the mission, e.g., need for column of files during prolonged night movement in wooded areas to ensure control and move quietly.
- He must : recognize that adequate time and space are required to change a platoon combat formation without halting and habitually report any information likely to require a change in formation to the platoon leader with minimum delay to permit the platoon leader to order timely changes in formation as required. 23

- : usually make changes in formation on the basis of SOP movements by each squad, with each squad following a standard route to make a particular change from one standard formation to another on the basis of the location, speed and direction of movement of the SOP base squad. 24
- : when taken under fire, change the formation on order or to meet the enemy threat with minimum delay and increase speed of movement to escape delivery of and neutralize enfilade, searching, or traversing fire within the limits imposed by the mission. 25
- : usually change from one standard platoon combat formation to another without halting to maintain dispersion and to avoid offering a fixed target to possible enemy observers, except in conditions where cover/concealment will facilitate the change and aid coordination prior to entering a danger area, e.g., a temporary halt to change from column to line within a wooded area prior to the coordinated crossing of a road or stream probably would be justified. 26
- He will : know that the platoon leader will vary the order of march among rifle squads over time to ensure an equitable distribution of extra-hazardous (point) or extremely fatiguing (flank security) duty, to spur alertness, and to provide uniform practice to the squads in operating in different positions within the platoon combat formation; train his IFTL's and men accordingly; and vary the order of march of his fire teams in a like manner. 27
- He must : indoctrinate his men with the necessity for each man to habitually maintain alert security to avoid surprise fire, if possible, and to be prepared to return fire with minimum delay, to include: 28
- a. Prohibiting slinging of arms during movement except when carrying a load, e.g., a litter casualty, that requires use of both hands.
 - b. Ordering and encouraging controlled reconnaissance by fire on suspected enemy positions in areas known to be devoid of friendly troops, except when prohibited by the requirement to avoid revealing one's own position.
 - c. Requiring his IFTL's to change fire team formations promptly on their own initiative to facilitate delivery of a maximum volume of effective fire when unanticipated contact occurs.

- : use all opportunities to train his squad in the essentials of use of platoon combat formations, to include: 29
- a. Closely observing the actions of IFTL's and potential leaders as they direct their men within the platoon combat formations, e.g., during establishment of bases of fire, maneuver, and fire and movement.
 - b. Making corrections on the spot when the situation permits, and covering other significant points in after-action critiques.
 - c. Practicing his squad in platoon combat formations in terrain similar to the anticipated battlefield when time and opportunity permit, with emphasis on the control of fire teams and individuals, maintenance of security and dispersion, and rapid reaction to battlefield cues, particularly those common to un-anticipated contact.
- : anticipate that the platoon leader will specify squad formations (file, line, squad column, or modified squad column) when necessary to coordinate plans and action toward accomplishment of the platoon mission, but know that each IRSL or acting squad leader must change his squad formation to meet situations as they arise and anticipate situations when available information permits and that IFTL's must control their fire teams in like manner. 30
- : permit the greatest possible latitude of initiative to his IFTL's within the limits imposed by the mission and their abilities, being aware that strongly centralized control robs subordinate leaders of their initiative and tends to increase their dependence on the IRSL and the platoon leader. 31
- He will : anticipate that the platoon leader will usually place the weapons squad well forward in a central position to permit rapid deployment as required on contact or in anticipation of contact. 32
- : unhesitatingly request useful supporting fires from the weapons squad on contact and recognize that such requests will aid the platoon leader to direct the deployment of weapons squad crews. 33

- : within the limits of his rifle squad's mission, provide as much security as possible for crew-served weapons from the weapons squad that are providing supporting fires near his squad's firing positions. 34
- : request the attachment of machineguns or antitank weapons to his squad to increase firepower where the need for the additional fire support can be anticipated, e.g., a machinegun attached to the point squad can reinforce the base of fire immediately upon contact during search and destroy missions. 35
- : as demanded by combat losses of qualified leaders and key weapons crew members within the platoon, anticipate the semi-permanent attachment of machineguns and antitank weapons to his squad pending the assignment of qualified replacements. 36
- : employ, control, provide security for, and ensure the welfare of weapons crews attached to his squad as if they were organic to the squad during attachment. 37
- He must : anticipate that, due to combat losses, he may be forced to lead a squad within a platoon consisting of two rifle squads reinforced with crew-served weapons from the depleted weapons squad and be prepared to modify his squad formation, organization, allocation of weapons, and operational techniques accordingly. 38
- He will : know that the platoon leader will: 39
 - a. Usually move near the front of deep platoon formations and near the center of wide formations prior to contact, but will vary his position to best control the platoon formation and the speed and direction of movement as required by the mission and the situation.
 - b. During decisive contact with the enemy, usually move with the platoon's maneuvering squad(s) prior to the assault and near the center of the platoon formation during the assault.
- : follow the platoon leader's example as it applies to his (IRSL's) control of his squad. 40
- : know that the platoon sergeant will: 41
 - a. Usually move near the center of the platoon prior to contact, e.g., with or behind the weapons squad.

- b. Vary his position as required to supervise movement of the platoon from the rear forward and to prevent straggling.
- c. Supervise the base of fire, including the employment of the weapons squad, upon decisive contact.
- d. Move the base of fire forward to aid in the assault as fire superiority permits progress forward.

He must : when leading the base squad:

42

- a. Maintain direction of movement (magnetic azimuth) and distance moved (paces converted to nearest 25 meters) by appointing a separate pace and compass man within his squad. (This applies primarily to movement for extended distances where accurate navigation is essential to adhere to a prescribed route and to provide accurate knowledge of the location of the platoon to facilitate accurate reporting and requests for supporting fires. See the paper titled Land Navigation.)
- b. Maintain contact with the nearest squad of the base platoon within company formations and report immediately if contact with the base platoon's nearest squad is lost or if adherence to a prescribed azimuth is causing unwarranted separation between the base squad and the critical element (nearest squad) of the base platoon.

He will : during strike missions, when brief, sporadic contacts occur with snipers or small groups of guerrillas who refuse decisive contact, anticipate that the platoon leader will change the platoon formation employed at the time of contact to offset information gained by the enemy through direct observation and to increase the probability of decisive contact, e.g., when terrain and visibility permit, a change from platoon column to platoon wedge or platoon vee may be ordered by the platoon leader to increase all-around security, enhance target detection, and increase the volume of fire that can be delivered if contact recurs in any direction.

43

- : know that the platoon leader must avoid a patterned reaction to enemy fire on contact, particularly during strike missions, e.g., habitual use of a trailing squad to maneuver right against enemy resistance to the front, in order to prevent enemy recognition of and reaction to predictable patterns, which will result in a loss of surprise and an increase in friendly casualties. If a pattern appears to be developing over time, bring it to the platoon leader's attention. 44
- : recognize that trailing squads not in contact in uncovered positions to the rear of elements receiving enemy fire will suffer casualties without being able to return the fire; require maximum use of available cover by his men in such situations; conduct continual visual reconnaissance to facilitate action ordered by the platoon leader (e.g., orders to maneuver right); and move his squad on his own initiative to reduce exposure time and gain useful firing positions when his position and knowledge of the situation clearly indicate no better alternative. 45
- : recognize the value of accurate and lethal surprise fire delivered in heavy volume on an enemy flank or rear. (Long bursts of automatic fire usually waste ammunition and aid the enemy to locate the firers.) 46
- : within the limits imposed by the mission and the situation, avoid shallow maneuvers that can be countered by minor shifts in the deflection of enemy weapons; use instead wide-swinging maneuver that will force the enemy to divide his attention and fires and prolong the unmasked delivery of lethal fire from the friendly fire base supporting the maneuver. 47
- He must : particularly during independent platoon missions in isolation from the parent company, anticipate the necessity to form a platoon perimeter defense against a superior enemy force pending the arrival of reinforcing troops or the delivery of supporting fires to defeat or drive off the enemy. 48
- : know that the formation of a platoon perimeter frequently will be forced under fire with little or no opportunity to select and move to defensible terrain. 49

- : know the platoon SOP for and practice moving into a perimeter from each platoon formation with minimum loss of firepower and initiative by the members of his squad, e.g., the platoon leader may establish as SOP that the squad(s) in contact must serve as the base of the formation, and designate clock positions for elements not in contact with the center of the squad(s) in contact marking the 12 o'clock position, i.e., "First squad (in contact), 1000 to 0200; second squad, 0200 to 0600; third squad, 0600 to 1000; machineguns support first squad on both flanks and AT weapons cover trail in both directions." 50
- He will : know that a typical platoon column formation usually places each squad in a squad file, a squad column, or a modified squad column with a rifle squad leading as base squad, followed on the same route by the weapons squad and the other two rifle squads with approximately 25 meters' distance between squads when visibility permits. 51
- : anticipate employment of the platoon column: 52
- a. For routine tactical movement on roads and trails.
 - b. For movement cross-country from one checkpoint to another where no specific reason for using a different formation exists.
 - c. For movement through defiles and on cleared passages through minefields.
 - d. For movement through dense vegetation and deep snow.
 - e. For movement when visibility is severely limited by darkness, fog, snow, rain, smoke, dust, or dense vegetation.
 - f. When speed of movement and control are dominant factors in selecting a formation.
- : know that the platoon column with squads in file provides a useful combination of maximum control and maximum dispersion, in that all personnel (except flank security) are in trace on one route, recognizing that this formation with squads in file 25 meters apart with 10 meters between men is well over 400 meters in length. 53
- : know that a similar degree of control with approximately 50 percent less dispersion exists during movement in the platoon column with the squads in squad column with fire teams abreast, recognizing that this formation will be some 250 meters in length. 54

- : know that the platoon column provides the maximum volume of fire to the flanks because the men need only to face a threatened flank to assume a line formation, but that delivery of fire to the front (or rear) is severely limited pending the assumption of a line formation by the leading (or trailing) rifle squad or the maneuver by an unengaged rifle squad to reinforce the base of fire or to strike the enemy flank. 55
- : recognize that the platoon column is flexible in that contact and engagement by the leading rifle squad often will permit reinforcement of the base of fire, maneuver to the right, or maneuver to the left by the unengaged trailing squads either separately, simultaneously, or in combination over time. 56
- : recognize that, while the rifle platoon does not withhold a reserve, adequate use of the depth of maneuver space provided through use of the platoon column often will facilitate deliberate development of an enemy position after contact in situations where prior lack of knowledge of the location and disposition of the enemy prohibited specific planning. 57
- : know that the platoon column formation is the most vulnerable formation to:
- a. Frontal or rear enfilade fire from flat trajectory weapons.
 - b. Air attack.
 - c. Searching indirect fire delivered from either the front or rear.
 - d. Traversing indirect fire delivered from either flank.
- : recognize that the platoon column with squads in file is the formation least vulnerable to enemy mines and boobytraps because men are moving in trace; increase distance between men to 15 to 20 meters (when visibility permits control to be retained) in areas where mines and boobytraps are a serious threat. 59
- : use the platoon column with squads in file to reduce fatigue for the majority of his men and to achieve maximum stealth during movement in dense brush and deep snow where a single trail opened by the point will serve the remainder of the platoon with the exception of the flank security. 60

- : during each use of the platoon column, specify the flank security to be employed by his squad and require his IFTL's to supervise and aid in the maintenance of contact and support of detached flank security personnel. 61
- : recognize that the necessity for speed/stealth or the necessity to minimize risk from mines and boobytraps may prohibit the use of detached security on the flanks of the column, e.g., during movement in thick brush in total darkness; when such situations occur, emphasize the necessity for squad members to maintain surveillance to the flanks. 62
- : use the modified squad column, when the enemy threat permits, within the platoon column during movement on slippery snow- or mud-covered slopes where packing of the route may create treacherous footing or across inundated areas, such as rice paddies, where men moving in long files tend to create fatiguing quagmires. 63
- : recognize that the platoon column is the most frequently used formation for routine tactical movement and know the platoon SOP formation to facilitate rapid formation and movement of the platoon in an emergency from a halted position with men dispersed, i.e., know the SOP order of march for the platoon, etc. 64
- : recognize that to habitually and routinely employ the platoon column because of ease of control will facilitate enemy action against the platoon, i.e., habitual use of any formation facilitates enemy action stemming from an accurate prediction of behavior. 65
- : anticipate that the platoon leader frequently will use the platoon wedge or the platoon vee in lieu of the platoon column to prevent enemy prediction of the platoon's formation. 66

He must : know that the typical platoon wedge formation usually places each squad in a squad file, squad column, or modified squad column with a base rifle squad leading the platoon, the weapons squad following in trace of the base squad at approximately 40 meters' distance, and a rifle squad moving on each flank of and parallel to the weapons squad at an interval of approximately 40 meters with 5 to 10 meters' distance between men within their respective squads when visibility permits.

67

: know that effective use of the platoon wedge will provide maximum all-around security and relatively excellent control in obscure situations when enemy fire may be received from any direction and fairly open terrain and good visibility permit a departure from the column formation without sacrificing control, e.g., during advance to contact, when patrolling, during movement to an unoccupied outpost position or a patrol base, during search and destroy missions, or during any mission requiring independent or semi-independent movement, especially when security must stem entirely from within the platoon.

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: know that the platoon wedge permits rapid delivery of fire from two rifle squads to either flank and facilitates rapid deployment of all three rifle squads into an inverted U or a perimeter with less total movement than any other platoon combat formation, thus making the platoon wedge the most versatile of all platoon combat formations for returning enemy fire from any frontal or flank direction with minimum time loss.

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: know that the platoon wedge is second only to the platoon column in ease of control, primarily because of the compactness of the formation, and that the major control difficulties are controlling the direction of movement of the two flank rifle squads, i.e., preventing loss of interval (dispersion) between the flank rifle squads and the weapons squad and preventing the flank rifle squads from veering away from the weapons squad with resultant loss of contact.

70

: anticipate that the platoon leader will specify a magnetic azimuth to aid the base squad and the flanking squads to maintain accurate direction and adequate intervals; appoint a compass man to aid adherence to the prescribed azimuth within each flanking rifle squad; and use connecting flankers in the intervals as required to ensure control of the platoon wedge.

71

: know that the platoon wedge is the most flexible of the platoon combat formations:

72

- a. The leading rifle squad can quickly deploy into line to meet an attack from the front with a flanking rifle squad immediately available to maneuver to the right or left or against both enemy flanks or to reinforce the base of fire.
- b. Either flank rifle squad may simply face outward to meet resistance from a flank and receive support by reinforcement of the base of fire or by maneuver from the leading squad.
- c. Resistance from the rear can be met by the movement of either or both flanking squads into line, movement of one flanking squad into line and maneuver of the other flanking squad to the right or left, as needed, and maneuver of the lead squad to either flank.
- d. Regardless of the direction of enemy resistance, the central location of the weapons squad will facilitate reinforcement of the fires of any rifle squad(s) committed either as a base of fire or as a maneuver element within the limits of visibility and useful fields of fire.

- : know that the length of the platoon wedge with squads in file and 10 meters between men is approximately 220 meters, and that this length is reduced to approximately 150 meters if squad columns or modified squad columns are employed. 73
- : know that in the platoon wedge with squads in file, the leading squad and at least one of the trailing squads will be highly vulnerable to flat trajectory enfilade fire delivered from the front (or rear) of the platoon in the absence of useful intervening cover such as tree trunks or a terrain mask. 74
- : recognize that the normal width (approximately 80 meters in squad file) of the three trailing squads and the tendency to lose interval in maintaining contact may often subject all the personnel in these three squads to the same flat trajectory fire (including Claymores) delivered from either flank. 75
- : recognize that during use of the platoon wedge with normal intervals and distances, that over 75 percent of the platoon's manpower (and organic firepower) is concentrated in an area less than 100 meters square and thus is highly vulnerable to observed enemy indirect fire. 76
- : know that the following precautions must be observed when enemy observed indirect fire is estimated to be a threat while in a platoon wedge: 77
- a. Increase intervals and distances, as the situation permits. (IRSL's and IFTL's must control intervals and distances as prescribed by the platoon leader.)
 - b. Within the limits imposed by the mission, avoid danger areas (crossroads, road junctions, large open areas, etc.) likely to be interdicted with enemy indirect fire. (The IRSL leading the point squad must keep the platoon leader informed of danger areas to the front of the platoon.)
 - c. If the platoon receives fire, all subordinate leaders and potential leaders must respond immediately to orders to alter the formation, e.g., to change to vee, to increase dispersion, and to move out of the concentrations of indirect fire as quickly as possible with minimum confusion and loss of control.

- : recognize that the platoon wedge with squads in file is considerably more vulnerable (discounting detached flank security) to mines and boobytraps than is the platoon column because three parallel routes are being employed in the wedge and because of the concentration of personnel in the three trailing squads. 78
- : to offset vulnerability to mines and boobytraps upon changing from a less vulnerable formation to the wedge, increase intervals between squads and the distances between men (to 15-20 meters) to reduce vulnerability when mines and boobytraps constitute a threat. 79
- : know that use of the platoon wedge requires a minimum of three trails to be broken with a resultant increase in fatigue and noise, particularly during movement in dense brush or deep snow, as compared to movement over the same ground in platoon column with squads in file, but that the security inherent in the wedge may permit movement without detached flank security that is almost as quiet and fast as movement in column with detached security personnel moving on each flank. 80
- : when the primary needs are to move as rapidly and quietly as possible and simultaneously be ready to react immediately to enemy fire from any direction (as in search and destroy missions), anticipate use of the platoon wedge without detached flank security when visibility will permit maintenance of lateral contact between the three trailing squads and when a lack of obstacles to movement will permit the desired speed to be maintained with an acceptable level of noise. 81
- : recognize that the platoon wedge provides inherent security from surprise attack from the front and flanks through the balanced distribution of rifle squads around the weapons squad and that inherent security to the rear exceeds that of any other standard platoon formation because a minimum of three individuals (one from each of the two trailing rifle squads and one from the weapons squad) can maintain intermittent observation and readily available fire to cover the platoon rear across a visible width of terrain usually exceeding 100 meters. 82
- : particularly during use of the platoon wedge on independent missions, recognize that the inherent security provided to the front and flanks of the platoon by the rifle squads and the compactness (lack of dispersion) of the three trailing squads may require more emphasis on detached security to the rear than to the flanks. 83

- : to provide security to the rear when using the platoon wedge, use buddy pairs from each trailing rifle squad, with one pair moving in the trace of and within visual distance of each of the two trailing rifle squads, particularly where wooded areas provide easily concealed positions for snipers in trees and where ground cover facilitates enemy use of concealed spider holes. 84
- : know that the platoon wedge facilitates more rapid formation of a perimeter than any other standard platoon formation. 85
- : know that the platoon wedge permits more rapid transition to the platoon line formation than any other standard platoon formation because of its symmetry, but for the same reason is more vulnerable to enemy area weapons. 86
- : know that the platoon leader will employ the platoon wedge in anticipation of change to platoon line only after due consideration of vulnerability to enemy weapons, including Claymores. 87
- He will : know that the typical platoon vee usually places all squads in squad file, squad column, or modified squad column with 5 to 10 meters between individuals; that two rifle squads lead the formation moving parallel to each other with approximately an 80-meter interval and with the right squad serving as base squad; that the weapons squad follows a route approximately centering on the interval between two leading rifle squads at a distance of approximately 40 meters; and that the third rifle squad follows the weapons squad in trace at a distance of approximately 40 meters. 88
- : know that the platoon vee can be effectively employed to: 89
- a. Move against an enemy to the front whose location, strength, and approximate disposition are known.
 - b. Cross large open areas that cannot be detoured.
 - c. Increase all-around security (as compared to the platoon column) while at the same time maintaining a greater degree of dispersion than that afforded by the platoon wedge.
 - d. Facilitate movement into a platoon line or into a platoon perimeter with minimum loss of dispersion.

: know that the platoon vee permits delivery of over 75 percent of the platoon's organic firepower to either flank merely by having the squads in column or file face in the direction in which fire is to be delivered and that the organic firepower of the two leading rifle squads can quickly be delivered to the front by transition of these two squads to a line. 90

: know that while the platoon vee provides a combination of security, control, and increased dispersion exceeding that afforded by any other standard platoon formation when terrain and visibility permit visual contact between the two leading rifle squads, it is nonetheless intrinsically difficult to control because: 91

a. It lacks the column's rear-to-front visual contact except within the weapons squad-trailing rifle squad element.

b. The 80-meter interval between the two leading rifle squads makes their movement more difficult to coordinate than is the case in the wedge where the three squads abreast follow a single leading squad.

: anticipate that the left leading rifle squad of the platoon vee formation probably will encounter more difficulty with control than any other element because of a tendency to veer off and thus gain or lose interval and lose accurate direction of movement. 92

: when necessary in using the platoon vee, use a connecting flanker or flankers moving between the two leading rifle squads on the same route to be used by the weapons squad and the trailing rifle squad to aid in maintaining contact between the two leading squads and to increase local security within the 80-meter interval (e.g., against enemy in spider holes). (Note: Connecting files following any other route between the two leading squads would increase vulnerability to mines and boobytraps.) 93

: emphasize control, but impress upon all IFTL's and potential leaders that the open nature of any terrain that will permit effective use of the platoon vee with the 80-meter interval between the two leading squads demands dispersion against observed enemy fire, and emphasize that the maintenance of dispersion, both intervals and distance, is a vital part of control at squad and fire team level. 94

: recognize that the platoon vee is extremely difficult to control in darkness, tall dense brush, smoke, fog, falling snow, heavy rain, and other conditions that severely limit visibility, and that such conditions usually dictate use of the column formation with stealthy deployment at a previously selected and easily identified point in front of the objective, e.g., squad release point in night attack. 95

: realize that both leading rifle squads are likely to become engaged immediately upon contact during use of the platoon vee to approach a specifically located enemy position of known strength or during a meeting engagement, and that the flexibility of the formation stems primarily from the availability of the trailing rifle squad for use to: 96

- a. Maneuver against either flank of the enemy.
- b. Reinforce the friendly base of fire on either flank.
- c. Move into line and participate in the assault on either friendly flank.
- d. Protect the rear of the platoon, including the crew-served weapons supporting the leading rifle squads.

: anticipate that flanking enemy fire delivered on either of the two leading rifle squads in the platoon vee is likely to cause casualties in the other leading squad. 97

: as IRSL of a leading rifle squad in the platoon vee, recognize that, when flanking fire is received by the other leading squad, he must move his squad quickly to avoid enemy fire and to return fire effectively, i.e., respond to the orders of the platoon leader or, in the absence of prompt orders, act quickly on his own initiative to avoid casualties and gain useful firing positions for his squad. 98

: as IRSL of a leading squad in the platoon vee formation, forewarn his men to employ carefully aimed fire on order, preferably from covered positions, against any positively identified enemy targets that may appear within the 80-meter interval between the two leading squads to avoid causing friendly casualties beyond the targets. (If the situation permits, targets located between the two leading squads should be destroyed by flank security men firing in the direction of movement of the platoon.) 99

- : recognize that frontal enfilade fire from flat trajectory weapons on either of the two leading rifle squads in the platoon vee is likely to cause casualties in the trailing weapons squad and rifle squad, except when useful intervening cover is available, and that the length of the formation makes it highly vulnerable to searching indirect fire from the front and to traversing indirect fire from either flank. 100
- : know that the platoon vee with squads in file and with 10 meters between individuals is approximately 350 meters in length, a dispersion that will materially reduce vulnerability to observed indirect enemy fire where terrain and visibility are such that control is not compromised. 101
- : know that the platoon vee is more vulnerable to mines and boobytraps than the platoon column because of the three parallel routes followed, though it is somewhat less vulnerable than the platoon wedge because the usual interval (80 meters) between parallel squads is twice that employed with the wedge. 102
- : know that the platoon leader will consider vulnerability to mines and boobytraps prior to changing from a less vulnerable formation to the platoon vee, and require minimum distances of 15 to 20 meters between men when mines and boobytraps constitute a threat and terrain and visibility do not prohibit the use of increased distances between men. 103
- : know that, while use of the platoon vee requires a minimum of three trails be broken, with a likely increase in fatigue and noise as compared with the column formation, it was designed to provide partial and vital deployment to meet a specifically located enemy of known strength, and that thus used it is superior to the column where terrain and visibility do not so limit control as to prohibit its use. 104
- : know that the platoon vee provides a degree of all-around security second only to that provided by the wedge, but that the following are nonetheless necessary: 105
 - a. Local security between the leading squads where low ground cover or tall trees provide positions for hidden enemy snipers.

b. Flank security when open terrain provides good fields of fire.

c. Rear security, especially when enemy snipers are a threat, e.g., a single enemy emerging from a concealed spider hole can deliver enfilade fire on a minimum of two squads simultaneously from the rear of the platoon.

: recognize that the platoon vee facilitates the formation of a perimeter with rapidity second only to the platoon wedge, while providing greater dispersion than the wedge with resultant better protection from enemy automatic and area weapons; know and practice the platoon SOP for forming a perimeter from the platoon vee formation. 106

He must : know that the typical platoon echelon (right or left) formation usually places all squads in squad file, squad column, or modified squad column with 5 to 10 meters between individuals with a rifle squad leading as base squad, each of the other two rifle squads echeloned approximately 40 meters to the right (or left) and approximately 40 meters to the rear of the preceding rifle squad, and with the weapons squad following in trace of the base rifle squad at approximately 40 meters distance, i.e., parallel to the center rifle squad with an approximate interval of 40 meters. 107

: know that the platoon echelon formation is used primarily to protect an open or exposed flank of a larger unit. 108

: know that the platoon echelon provides maximum firepower to the flank in the direction of echelon, because merely facing that flank places the platoon in line and echeloned in the direction of original movement, but that delivery of heavy fire to the front demands transition to platoon line. 109

: recognize that the platoon echelon is the most difficult platoon formation to control, except the platoon line, because of the lack of direct rear-to-front visual contact between the elements in echelon, the demand to anticipate a major enemy threat from the echeloned flank while moving forward, and the infrequency of use of the formation. 110

- : anticipate that the trailing rifle squad of the platoon echelon will encounter more difficulty with control than any other element because of its distance and comparative isolation from the base squad and other elements. 111
- : as IRSL of the trailing rifle squad in a platoon echelon formation, know and adhere to the prescribed azimuth, guide on the preceding rifle squad, and if control proves difficult, request permission to move in the trace of the preceding rifle squad. 112
- : recognize that the platoon echelon lacks flexibility except for use in flank protection, e.g., it permits almost immediate formation of a platoon line facing in the direction of echelon and favors maneuver in the direction of echelon, but that its imbalance limits it primarily to the mission of flank protection. 113
- : anticipate that darkness; tall, dense vegetation; precipitation; etc.; may prohibit effective control of the platoon echelon despite an assigned mission to protect an open or exposed flank. 114
- : when limited visibility makes control of the echelon marginal, anticipate that the platoon leader will tighten control while meeting the demands of the mission by employing a platoon column that places the weapons squad parallel to and on the friendly (interior) flank of the center rifle squad within an interval that will ensure maintenance of contact. 115
- : recognize that enemy enfilade fire delivered along the axis of the echelon from the front or rear of the platoon may cause casualties simultaneously in all rifle squads in the absence of intervening cover, that the leading rifle squad and the weapons squad will be vulnerable to a single source of enemy enfilade fire from the front or rear of the platoon, and that the entire platoon is highly vulnerable to searching or traversing indirect fire along the axis of the echelon. 116
- : know that the platoon echelon is considerably more vulnerable to mines and boobytraps than the platoon column, and that the use of squad columns or modified squad columns within the platoon echelon increases this vulnerability even more. 117

- : when the mission demands that the platoon protect the flank of a larger unit in an area where mines and boobytraps constitute a serious threat, know that the platoon leader may accomplish the mission by using the platoon column with squads in file and distances of 15 to 20 meters between men. 118
- : recognize that the formation of a perimeter from the platoon echelon may be demanded to forestall an enemy attack by superior forces on an open or exposed flank; know and practice the platoon SOP for forming a perimeter from the platoon echelon formation. 119
- He will : know that the typical platoon line formation places all rifle squads on line in squad line formation with approximately equal intervals of 5 to 10 meters between men with the center (or a specially designated) squad acting as base squad, and with the weapons squad providing active support or immediately available support from the rear or one flank or integrated in part, e.g., machineguns, into the platoon line. 120
- : know that the platoon line formation can be effectively employed for: 121
- a. Deploying to increase the volume of fire to be placed on a specific area during the attack.
 - b. Advancing by fire and movement upon located enemy during the development of a volume of lethal fire that will permit a coordinated assault.
 - c. Assaulting definitely located enemy positions after gaining fire superiority.
 - d. Searching an area in detail to locate and capture or destroy hidden enemy and cached or abandoned weapons and supplies.
 - e. Occupying temporary defensive positions, e.g., after an assault or when protecting a landing or drop zone.
 - f. Blocking ill-defined escape routes on the perimeter of an enemy-held area being pressured by another friendly force.
 - g. Reducing exposure time during coordinated crossing of roads or other open areas subject to enemy artillery, mortar, rocket, or flat trajectory fires.

- : know that the platoon line provides a maximum volume of fire to the front and is capable of delivering an equal volume of fire to the rear, if necessary, during the blocking of escape routes or when searching an area for hidden enemy, but that delivery of fire to the flanks is usually limited to fire from two or three men on either flank.

122
- : know that the platoon line is the most difficult of all platoon formations to control, focus the attention of all personnel upon the need for deliberate coordination and cooperation to aid in maintaining control, and habitually specify a magnetic azimuth and emphasize the approximate interval to be maintained between men in line by IFTL's and potential leaders.

123
- : anticipate the difficulty of control of the platoon line formation under fire and during limited visibility as a consequence of the tasks that tend to focus the attention of the men toward the front (search for targets, engagement of enemy targets and suspected enemy locations, watch of footing and of path to avoid mines and boobytraps, selection of cover and concealment during individual movement, maintenance of direction, etc.); emphasize the necessity for each man to glance side-wise frequently and to use sound cues, as well as sight, to aid in maintaining contact and an interval approximating the one specified by leaders.

124
- : anticipate that the loss of men to enemy fire will create gaps in the platoon line which will further increase the difficulty of control.

125
- : train all squad members to guard against the tendency for men within a platoon line formation to gravitate toward the most obvious cover and concealment during forward movement with resultant loss of dispersion, increased vulnerability to enemy fire, and loss of control.

126
- : require his men to employ easily identified steering marks to aid them to maintain direction and to cover their individual sectors, and require use of all available cover and concealment within individual sectors, particularly when the advance in platoon line is by fire and movement.

127
- : know that the platoon line is the least flexible of the platoon combat formations, primarily because of its width and difficulty of control, particularly under conditions of limited visibility.

128

: anticipate the probable necessity to reorganize the squad after each use of the platoon line in the face of effective enemy fire and seek to reorganize on defensible terrain, when possible, without becoming isolated from the remainder of the platoon. 129

: when the platoon line is to be employed in a night assault, anticipate that the platoon leader will seek opportunity to halt momentarily and deploy stealthily on a natural terrain feature running perpendicular to the intended direction of assault to increase coordination and control, but will avoid halting even temporarily during unlimited visibility when the enemy is capable of delivering observed or aimed fire. 130

: anticipate that the platoon leader may, when concealment such as a terrain mask, woods, or brush permits, regain control of the platoon line quickly after completing search of an area not under effective enemy fire or after a premature deployment into platoon line in anticipation of an enemy threat that failed to develop, e.g., by having all rifle squad members face to the right (or left), integrating the weapons squad, and ordering a 90-degree change of direction of the resulting column formation to continue the advance in the original direction; assiduously avoid unconcealed movement parallel to an active enemy front from which aimed or observed fire may be received. 131

: reduce the interval between men in the platoon line to increase control for a night assault or to facilitate detailed search of a densely vegetated area only after due consideration to the probable effects of enemy fire, including the likelihood of suffering casualties from mines and boobytraps. 132

: as IRSL of the point squad in a deep platoon formation, recognize the potential lethality of frontal enfilade fire from enemy automatic weapons and the danger from searching indirect fire; unhesitatingly recommend change to platoon line from deep platoon formations, such as the column or vee, when a lack of cover and concealment demands dispersion to avoid heavy casualties. 133

: know that the platoon line is the formation most vulnerable to: 134

- a. Flanking enfilade fire.
- b. Searching indirect fire from the flanks.
- c. Traversing indirect fire from the front or rear.

: recognize that commitment of the platoon to a platoon line in the assault may prohibit changing formations to escape such fires (par. 133), and seek protection from lethal fires, within the limits of control by himself and his IFTL's, by staggering his squad members in depth and by using fire and movement to advance pending neutralization of the enemy fires. 135

: know that: 136

- a. Attacks frequently bog down and assaults fail to materialize because small units often are caught by effective enemy fire while in deep formations, pinned down, and prohibited from developing the full potential of effective fire from their organic weapons.
- b. There may be a requirement for aggressive action in deploying from a formation in depth to a platoon line in the face of apparent enemy threat prior to receipt of lethal enemy fire.
- c. Anticipate that the platoon leader may, if in doubt as to the need to deploy, deploy the leading squad into line to reconnoiter by fire and forewarn trailing squads to anticipate deployment into platoon line to close with the enemy as rapidly as possible behind a maximum volume of lethal fire to reduce exposure time, accomplish the mission, and limit casualties likely to occur with a less bold development of the situation.

: know that the platoon line is the most vulnerable of all formations to mines and boobytraps because each individual moves on a separate route in the typical line formation; avoid use of the line, when possible, if faced with mines and boobytraps, considering, instead, use of the column formation, i.e., with men in file. 137

: when threatened by mines and boobytraps, but when the mission nonetheless demands use of the platoon line, e.g., an assault, increase the interval between men to 15 to 20 meters. 138

: know that the platoon line is the noisiest of all formations because each man is required to break trail for himself, and that control is more difficult, so use of the line will reduce speed and increase fatigue, especially during movement in deep snow or through dense vegetation. 139

- : recognize the requirement for emphasis upon flank security during use of the platoon line, and, as a flank squad leader, designate specific squad members to maintain contact with the adjacent friendly platoon. 140
- : as a flank squad leader when the platoon's flanks are exposed in the platoon line, refuse and protect the vulnerable open flank by echeloning all or part of a fire team to the right or left, as applicable, and hold the flank IFTL responsible for flank security for the squad and the platoon. 141
- : know that enemy use of concealed spider holes and sniper positions in trees will leave the rear of a platoon line formation vulnerable to bushwhacking enemy fire, and consider the use of either the staggered double line described earlier or lone riflemen well to the rear of each fire team formation whose purpose it is to cover the backs of the fire team members. 142
- : anticipate that his men frequently will be required to advance by crawling or by short rushes under covering fire during deployment from a deep formation into platoon line and after deployment into platoon line pending development of fire superiority. 143
- : supervise and rehearse practice in deployment into platoon line and in the use of fire and movement in platoon line to develop stamina and increase individual ability to maintain orientation and direction of movement and thus increase the overall control of the platoon combat formation that permits the maximum delivery of fire from organic platoon weapons during the assault. 144

2. ON ORDER, THE IRSL WILL SPECIFY AND CONTROL THE RELATIVE POSITION, DIRECTION, AND SPEED OF MOVEMENT OF HIS ASSIGNED COMBAT VEHICLE AS AN INTEGRAL ELEMENT OF HIS PARENT PLATOON'S INITIAL MOUNTED PLATOON COMBAT FORMATION AND REQUIRE SUBSEQUENT CHANGES IN RELATIVE POSITION, DIRECTION, AND SPEED OF MOVEMENT IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE ORDERS OF HIS PLATOON LEADER, THE DEMANDS OF HIS SQUAD MISSION AS RELATED TO THE PLATOON MISSION, AND THE GOVERNING SITUATION UNDER ALL CONDITIONS OF TERRAIN, WEATHER, VISIBILITY, AND ENEMY PROXIMITY AND ACTIVITY.

- He will : know that the use of standard and flexible mounted platoon combat formations is vital to the effective control of the platoon's combat vehicles and fires during movement to successive positions to permit defeat of the enemy or to permit rapid, armor-protected movement to advantageous positions at which the platoon members can dismount and fight effectively on foot. 145
- : know that the platoon leader will specify and supervise the timely use of the column, wedge, echelon, or line formation, as applicable, to satisfy the requirements for immediately available fire, control, security, flexibility, and speed of movement after due consideration of the platoon mission, the weather, terrain, and enemy proximity and activity. 146
- He must : know and require that each IFTL and driver know each standard mounted platoon combat formation and the routes followed by each APC or MICV to change from any standard formation to any other including: 147
- a. The usual locations of each rifle squad vehicle and the weapons squad vehicle.
 - b. The approximate intervals and distances usually governing the separation of vehicles.
- : without references or notes, diagram, for use as a training aid during instruction, the standard formations, and show the approximate intervals and distances quantitatively. 148
- : demonstrate the required action on the ground by directing the movement of each vehicle in any standard formation, and supervise movement and maintenance of locations, intervals, and distances during combat employment. 149
- : recognize that the basic uses and characteristics of the dismounted platoon column, wedge, echelon, and line formations are largely pertinent to the mounted counterparts of platoon combat formations; know and apply the pertinent relationships during employment of mounted formations. 150
- : know that the platoon leader's vehicle will usually serve as the base vehicle for platoon formations and formation changes and thus establish the speed and direction of movement for the platoon and that the platoon leader will designate a temporary base vehicle as necessary to coordinate the movement of the platoon within a larger formation, e.g., company line formation. 151

- : adhere to SOP or specified (by the platoon leader) distances and intervals between vehicles to maintain approximately 50 to 100 meters' separation with habitual use of the larger separation when terrain, visibility, and the situation will permit; recognize the need for mutual support between elements; and avoid the isolation of a vehicle that will deny mutual support, particularly when operating against guerrillas or in fluid situations. 152
- : recognize the flexibility of mounted platoon combat formations and, as a vehicle commander, exercise freedom of movement within each formation to take advantage of available cover and concealment and to avoid obstacles. 153
- : cover his established areas of observation and fire to gain coordinated, all-around security for the platoon formation at all times. 154
- : know that the vehicular-mounted machinegun is difficult to control when the vehicle is in motion and make maximum use of stationary hull defilade positions when employing the weapon against critical targets, e.g., heavy, accurate fire from a caliber .50 machinegun will break tracks and destroy suspension systems on enemy tracked vehicles and thus immobilize them. 155
- : use the heavy machinegun on the ground mount to reinforce the base of fire as demanded by the situation. 156
- He will : know that the speed of movement of APC's and MICV's is approximately 10 times as rapid as dismounted movement and maintain accurate location and orientation despite rapid movement, particularly when visibility is limited by darkness, inclement weather, or dense vegetation, by focusing attention upon: 157
 - a. The location of the designated base vehicle, when practical, or the location of the adjacent or preceding vehicle in the direction of the base vehicle as dictated by his position in the formation.
 - b. Previously prepared essential route control data based on detailed map study and amplified where possible by preliminary air or ground reconnaissance.
 - c. Recognition of checkpoints, including warning checkpoints, preceding arrival at checkpoints where changes in route are required.

- : use an accurately compensated, vehicular-mounted compass and the vehicle odometer to maintain accurate distance and direction during movement between check-points and phase lines and during movement to firing positions or designated dismount points. (In combat vehicles lacking a compensated, vehicular-mounted compass, the IRSL must use the lensatic compass with due consideration to the effect of ferrous metals upon the accuracy of the hand-held compass, i.e., he is likely to have to dismount and move away from the vehicle to obtain an accurate reading of an azimuth.) 158
- : when mounted in the platoon leader's vehicle, aid the platoon leader with navigation by maintaining a log showing distances (in miles to the nearest tenth of a mile) and directions (magnetic azimuths to the nearest 5 degrees) moved or by aiding the driver to adhere to route data prepared by the platoon leader or by the IRSL. (Vehicular navigation by dead reckoning and map-terrain association is adequately covered in the paper titled Land Navigation and is not repeated herein.) 159
- He must : use the most effective means of communication available, including radio, arm-and-hand, and flag signals to respond to and relay signals for formation changes, changes in speed and direction, and similar instructions from the platoon leader. 160
- He will : know that the platoon leader will plan or anticipate the location of dismount positions for the platoon that will provide defilade for dismounting, when practical, and will order a mounted formation that lends itself to the rapid formation of the desired dismounted formation prior to ordering the platoon to dismount and fight on foot. 161
- : to facilitate transition from mounted to dismounted formation and vice versa: 162
- a. Know and drill his squad members in the established SOP mounting and dismounting procedures.
 - b. Exercise freedom of action and initiative in guiding his vehicle to a specific dismount location in keeping with his mission to gain available cover, concealment, and a tactically useful dismount position.

- c. Relate the direction of movement of the vehicle to the direction of action required of his squad members upon dismounting, i.e., the vehicle should face the direction of action and provide fire and cover for the occupants during dismount.
- d. Orient his squad members prior to dismount on the basis of his own observation and timely information and instructions received from the platoon leader.

He must : know that the platoon leader will, to gain surprise when using mounted formations, combine speed, a carefully selected combat formation, and closely coordinated indirect supporting fires as substitutes for the stealth that can be achieved by dismounted troops, e.g., use a combination of HE and WP to mask engine noise and reduce enemy visibility, early transition from column to line to gain dispersion and distribute fire across the objective, and speed to reduce total exposure time en route to the final coordination line or to the objective. 163

He will : know that the platoon leader will establish an SOP and issue necessary orders to cover the disposition and security of combat vehicles to protect them when the platoon is fighting on foot; place the platoon sergeant or weapons squad leader in charge of the vehicles; and, when practical, make maximum use of vehicular-mounted weapons to support the rifle squads from hull defilade positions, i.e., augment the fires of the weapons squad. 164

He must : know and enforce SOP to ensure the security of his assigned combat vehicle by the driver in the dismount area and provide a gunner to man the vehicular-mounted weapon in readiness to meet an air or ground attack when drivers must move vehicles forward in exposed areas to rejoin the dismounted squad. 165

: recognize that the APC or MICV is not a tank; that it has the visible characteristics (bulk, shape, and high silhouette) of a tank, but lacks the armor protection and firepower of a tank; that the APC or MICV will draw enemy antitank fire to which it is highly vulnerable. 166

: select routes and use cover, concealment, camouflage, suppressive fire, and speed to the maximum to avoid effective enemy antitank fire. 167

: change formations, as directed by the platoon leader, without halting, and emphasize to his driver that halting, except in defiladed positions, will invite enemy fire and increase the probability of being hit by enemy antitank fire. 168

: ensure that his driver and IFTL's know the capabilities and limitations of the combat vehicle relative to movement over difficult terrain; ensure that they can select negotiable routes, recognize and avoid obstacles to movement, such as gullies, soft ground, embankments, etc.; and maintain the relative position of the squad's vehicle in combat formations in the event he (IRSL) becomes an ineffective casualty. 169

He will : use, maintain, and supervise the use and maintenance of the vehicular-mounted machinegun by his IFTL's, driver, and selected squad members for: 170

- a. Long-range reconnaissance by fire.
- b. Delivery of suppressive or destructive fire upon enemy positions, with priority of fire to enemy antitank weapons and automatic weapons.
- c. Reinforcement of a squad base of fire.
- d. Antiaircraft fire against enemy aircraft within range.

3. ON ORDER, THE IRSL WILL SPECIFY AND CONTROL THE RELATIVE POSITION, DIRECTION, AND SPEED OF MOVEMENT OF HIS ASSIGNED COMBAT VEHICLE AS AN INTEGRAL ELEMENT OF THE INITIAL FORMATION OF AN INTEGRATED TANK-APC/MICV COMBAT FORMATION AND REQUIRE SUBSEQUENT CHANGES IN RELATIVE POSITION, DIRECTION, AND SPEED OF MOVEMENT OF HIS VEHICLE AS A PART OF THE INTEGRATED FORMATION IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE ORDERS OF HIS PLATOON LEADER, THE DEMANDS OF HIS SQUAD MISSION AS RELATED TO THE COMMON MISSION, AND THE GOVERNING SITUATION UNDER ALL CONDITIONS OF TERRAIN, WEATHER, VISIBILITY, AND ENEMY PROXIMITY AND ACTIVITY.

He must : know that his platoon leader will: 171

- a. Coordinate plans for the use of mounted, integrated tank-APC/MICV formations with the cooperating tank platoon leader.

b. Specify and supervise the initial mounted formation for his platoon as required by the common mission with due consideration to control, security, firepower, terrain, information of the enemy, and the combat formation(s) to be used by the cooperating tank platoon.

c. Order and supervise subsequent changes for his platoon on a timely basis according to plan or as demanded by changes in the situation.

: anticipate that tanks will lead the integrated formation to provide rapid movement, armor-protected firepower, and shock action during combined arms attacks, particularly when Infantry troops are mounted initially and when the intent is to conduct a mounted assault or to move as close to the objective as possible prior to dismounting. 172

: know, and ensure that his men know, that the purpose of integrated, mounted platoon combat formations is to make full use of the common combat characteristics of tanks and APC's or MICV's; that is: 173

a. Mobility is retained because all combat vehicles advance at approximately the same rate of speed.

b. A common, coordinated source of indirect fire can support the integrated, combined arms formation.

c. Casualties are reduced by armor protection.

d. Personnel in the APC's or MICV's can protect the rear and flanks of the tanks during movement and dismount on or near the objective to take maximum advantage of the firepower and shock action of the tanks to facilitate mopping up.

: know and require his IFTL's and his driver to know each standard tank platoon combat formation and the routes followed by each tank to change from any standard formation to any other, including the usual location of the base (tank platoon leader's) vehicle and the visual signals used to control tank platoon combat formations. 174

: recognize that a lack of knowledge of the formations used by the tank platoon and inability of Infantry vehicle commanders to recognize visual signals displayed by tank commanders will: 175

- a. Hinder coordination between tank commanders and APC/MICV commanders in integrated formations.
- b. Result in overexposure of the more lightly armored vehicles.
- c. Cause intermingling of the combat vehicles with consequent confusion and loss of control, particularly when a mounted assault is conducted.

He will : know that his platoon leader will:

176

- a. Thoroughly brief his IRSL's, IFTL's, and drivers on the planned formations for both the tanks and the APC's or MICV's.
- b. Within the limits of the mission, employ APC or MICV formations that take maximum advantage of the protection afforded by the tanks.
- c. Employ a formation similar to the tank platoon formation so the tanks are interposed between the enemy and the more lightly armored APC's or MICV's.
- d. Where the terrain and the situation permit, have APC's or MICV's follow in the tracks of leading tanks to avoid mines or other obstacles and use trails broken by tanks in timbered and brush-covered areas.

: anticipate the planned changes in integrated formations and issue timely orders to his driver; observe for unanticipated changes in tank formations; and react appropriately to unplanned changes to the front and flanks, e.g., if several tanks in a platoon are halted by effective antitank fire or by mines, APC's or MICV's may be ordered to defiladed or concealed positions to permit troops to dismount and fight on foot to locate and remove mines, to neutralize or destroy the antitank weapons, or to designate enemy antitank weapon locations to tank commanders for destruction by tank gun fire.

177

: maintain visual contact with the tanks to his front and monitor the tank platoon radio frequency, if practicable, to aid in coordinating the advance with emphasis upon rapid reaction to changes demanded by enemy action or unanticipated obstacles.

178

: maintain visual and radio communication with his platoon leader; respond promptly to orders to position his vehicle in any standard, mounted column, wedge, echelon, or line formation required to meet the requirements of the common mission in accordance with plans or as demanded by the situation; and provide support to his opposite number within the tank formation and to the adjacent APC's or MICV's within the limits of his mission and capabilities. 179

: use his vehicular-mounted weapon and hand grenades, as applicable, to destroy any hostile forces overrun or passed through by the tank formation. 180

He must : when resistance on the objective demands a dis-
mounted assault: 181

- a. Respond to orders to use (or continue to use) a line formation to a defiladed or concealed position (Final CL) as close to the objective as possible, i.e., guide his driver to a specific dismount position.
- b. Orient his squad, order dismount and assumption of a line formation to assault or mop up his assigned portion of the objective according to plan or in accord with his platoon leader's orders.
- c. Require his driver to secure the APC or MICV.
- d. When practicable, order the vehicular-mounted weapon manned to provide fire or immediately available fire to support the assault and to provide security toward the rear and flanks.

He will : when lack of enemy resistance permits a mounted
assault: 182

- a. Avoid cresting (skylining) his vehicle on the objective as a target for enemy antitank guns on the next terrain feature.
- b. Direct his driver to a hull defilade position from which effective fire can be delivered with minimum exposure of the vehicle.
- c. Avoid intermingling tanks and APC's or MICV's in the objective area, if the attack is to be continued, to minimize confusion and maintain control.

: in the absence of orders in any situation, e.g., if radio communication fails and limited visibility prohibits effective use of visual signals, act on his own initiative to accomplish his squad mission and contribute to the common mission and report action taken to the platoon leader as soon as possible. 183

4. ON ORDER, THE IRSL WILL COORDINATE PLANS FOR HIS SQUAD'S OPERATION AS AN INTEGRAL PART OF INTEGRATED TANK-DISMOUNTED INFANTRY COMBAT FORMATIONS WITH THE COOPERATING TANK COMMANDER(S); SPECIFY AND SUPERVISE HIS INITIAL DISMOUNTED SQUAD FORMATION AS REQUIRED BY THE COMMON MISSION AND THE PLANS AND ORDERS OF HIS PLATOON LEADER; AND ORDER AND SUPERVISE SUBSEQUENT FORMATION CHANGES FOR HIS SQUAD ON A TIMELY BASIS ACCORDING TO PLAN, AS DIRECTED BY HIS PLATOON LEADER, OR AS DEMANDED BY CHANGES IN THE SITUATION UNDER ALL CONDITIONS OF TERRAIN, VISIBILITY, AND ENEMY PROXIMITY AND ACTIVITY.

He will : know that his platoon leader will: 184

- a. Coordinate plans for the use of integrated tank-dismounted Infantry combat formations with the cooperating tank platoon leader.
- b. Specify and supervise the initial dismounted formation(s) as required by the common mission with due consideration to control, security, firepower, terrain, information of the enemy, and the combat formation(s) to be used by the cooperating tank platoon.
- c. Order and supervise subsequent formation changes for his platoon on a timely basis according to plan or as demanded by changes in the situation.

: know that the formations and axes (routes) of attack of the tank and infantry platoons may coincide or differ as required by the terrain, mission, and enemy situation. 185

: anticipate use of a separate route for the dismounted Infantry combat formation to conserve energy and to escape enemy fire likely to be drawn by tanks when speed of tank formation is more important than the need for dismounted protection for the tanks; that is, the platoon leaders will adjust the combat movement schedule to ensure coordination, e.g., dismounted formation may move first on a separate route, tanks move later but more rapidly, and the two formations integrate at a preselected Final CL for coordinated assault. 186

: ensure that his IFTL's and men know and perform their duties when fighting dismounted with an integrated tank-infantry formation, i.e., the dismounted troops must: 187

- a. Protect the tanks against individual enemy antitank measures.
- b. Breach, remove, or select routes to detour natural and man-made antitank obstacles, including anti-tank mines.
- c. Detect, locate, identify, and designate targets for tank main guns and machineguns with major emphasis upon enemy tanks, antitank guns, automatic weapons, and fortified positions.
- d. Lead the attack dismounted, if necessary, in rough terrain, built-up areas, or in open, wooded areas.
- e. Provide security for tanks in assembly areas and attack positions, and at any temporary halt.

: ensure that his IFTL's and men know the capabilities and limitations of tanks relative to the recognition of obstacles and recognition of routes suitable for tank movement in rough terrain. 188

: use and supervise the use of arm-and-hand signals by all squad members to guide individual tanks around obstacles or into defiladed positions. 189

: ensure through coordination with the tank commander(s) that tank crew members provide mutual support to dismounted Infantry when fighting in integrated formations, i.e., tank crews must: 190

- a. Neutralize or destroy hostile personnel and weapons by application of fire or by crushing.
- b. Clear paths for dismounted Infantry in anti-personnel minefields, barbed wire, deep snow, thick vegetation, etc.
- c. Provide antitank protection and give high priority to the destruction of enemy automatic weapons.
- d. Reconnoiter by fire the target areas designated by IRSL's and IFTL's.
- e. Support by direct fire when Infantry lead the attack.
- f. Lead the attack when the terrain and situation permit.

- : coordinate the routes, formations, and specific tasks to be performed by his integrated tank-dismounted Infantry team(s) during the planning phase of the operation as directed by his platoon leader. 191
- : designate specific dismounted elements of his squad to fight in cooperation with specific tanks and crews so that each infantry-tank element within an integrated formation is mutually supporting as a team to contribute to the accomplishment of the common mission, e.g., the IRSL may pair one fire team with each of the two tanks in a tank section to form integrated teams and maintain unit integrity. 192
- : when assigning specific fire teams to operate with specific tanks, assign the best qualified IFTL to lead a fire team with one tank while he (IRSL) accompanies the fire team with the other tank of the tank section. 193
- : when leading a flank squad of his platoon, plan to accompany the flank fire team of his squad to maintain contact with adjacent friendly troops or to protect his platoon's open flank, as applicable. 194
- : know that his platoon leader will, with the aid of the tank platoon leader, thoroughly brief all members of each infantry-tank element; conduct rehearsals of the formations to be employed, if practical; and use sand table effects for briefing and practice if full-scale rehearsal is impractical. 195
- : through face-to-face coordination, ensure complete understanding between his IFTL's and the specific tank commanders and crews that will form the integrated teams encompassing his squad. 196
- He must : adapt standard, dismounted squad and platoon combat formations to use by the integrated infantry-tank team, e.g., employ the platoon line formation in the assault, but require fire teams (or squads) operating with individual tanks to use modified column formations when tanks are leading so the tank provides maximum useful cover for the dismounted troops. 197
- : strongly emphasize the necessity for his IFTL's to control their men, maintain vigilant security, and make maximum use of tank weapons by designating targets to ensure against defeat in detail, e.g., a tank platoon in line formation with sections advancing by bounds with accompanying Infantry may cover an area approximately 400 meters' square, so control must be decentralized, i.e., IRSL's and IFTL's must control their small units. 198

- : anticipate use of a common radio frequency for the infantry-tank formation to facilitate control, and habitually adhere to prescribed radio procedure to avoid overloading the radio net. 199
- He will : particularly when dismounted Infantry combat formations are separated from the tank formations (on separate axes), ensure that all personnel know the signal (e.g., yellow smoke) for identifying friendly troops to avoid or halt the delivery of friendly fire because it is extremely difficult for tank crews in moving tanks to identify friend or foe on the basis of fleeting glimpses of camouflaged soldiers who are using all available cover and concealment. 200
- : ensure that he and his IFTL's carry smoke grenades and that a panel is available within each fire team for identifying friendly troop formations to prevent or halt the delivery of mistakenly delivered lethal fire from friendly sources. (This is pertinent to all operations, not merely to infantry-tank actions.) 201
- : emphasize the need for tanks to advance at a speed that will permit dismounted combat formations to stay abreast of or closely behind the tanks and thus provide vital close-in protection against tank-hunter teams and avoid exhausting the dismounted troops en route to the objective. 202
- He must : forewarn his men against masking the fires of tanks and against unnecessary exposure to muzzle blast from tank main guns, e.g., muzzle blast from a tank main gun may rupture eardrums or temporarily deafen soldiers and thus deny them use of sound cues essential to interpreting commands and locating targets such as automatic weapons and antitank guns. 203
- : use and ensure that his IFTL's and potential leaders use the external telephones on the rear of tanks to forewarn tank commanders of obstacles, to designate targets and areas to be reconnoitered by fire, to adjust tank gun fire, and to coordinate infantry-tank movement; require practice in the use of the external telephones during rehearsals. 204

- : when operating as part of an integrated infantry-tank formation, usually move in close proximity to the tank supported by the fire team he is accompanying so he can coordinate essential changes in plans (via use of the external telephone) with the supported tank commander; require the senior IFTL to move near the second tank for the same purpose when the squad's fire teams support the two tanks of a tank section. 205
- : anticipate, in the absence of other instructions, that his platoon leader (i.e., the Infantry platoon leader) usually will move in close proximity to the tank occupied by the tank platoon leader to coordinate changes in plans and formations as required by changes in the situation. 206
- He will : know that men riding on tanks are significantly more vulnerable to bullets and fragments than dismounted men because tanks are easily detected as targets and thus draw heavy volumes of direct and indirect fire; forewarn his men against riding on tanks in assault formations; and require them to use the turret for cover when directed to ride on tanks during movement to contact. 207
- He must : when time permits, hold after-action critiques on the use of combat formations to eliminate errors, to aid in establishing or revising SOP, and to orient replacements. 208
- : seek opportunity to practice combined arms combat formations in terrain similar to that in which enemy contact is anticipated, particularly when replacements must be integrated into the squad. 209
- He will : when tactical grouping will permit, seek to fight repeatedly with the same tank platoon and group the same fire teams and IFTL's with the same tank commanders and tank crews to take maximum advantage of prior common experience. 210